

FIRST COMMITTEE: EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

PROPOSED REDRAFT OF ARTICLE 7 SUGGESTED BY THE DELEGATION OF BELGIUM

The Belgian delegation considers that the wording of the last part of the second sentence of paragraph 1 of the new Article 7 (document E/CONF.2/C.1/15, page 3), as provisionally decided on at the Eighth Meeting of the First Committee, has the following disadvantages:

The formula "improvement of wages and working conditions as advances in productivity may permit" (in French: "amélioration des conditions de rémunération et de travail dans la mesure où le permet l'accroissement de la productivité") makes any improvement in labour conditions dependent upon a previous increase in productivity. This formula has dangerous implications, since it could serve as a pretext for stabilization of inadequate standards of living. It could thus promote a policy contrary to the aims of Article 7, insofar as it might encourage the maintenance of out-of-date methods of production which can only subsist by virtue of sub-standard wages and labour conditions.

The Belgian delegation proposes that the second sentence of paragraph 1 of the new Article 7 be re-worded as follows:

"They recognize that all countries have a common interest in the achievement, maintenance and improvement of fair labour standards related to productivity." (In French: "Ils reconnaissent que tous les pays ont un intérêt commun à la réalisation, au maintien et à l'amélioration de normes équitables de travail en rapport avec la productivité de la main-d'oeuvre.")

This wording avoids going into too much detail but indicates in general terms the Charter's parallel aims of increased productivity and improved labour standards.

The Belgian delegation has the honour to request the Secretariat to transmit this note to delegations and expresses the hope that it will be possible to obtain their agreement to the redrafting of the passage in question on the above lines.

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